Lecture 2: What is Community Work?

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http://www.youmaker.com/video/sa?id=c04b0385ee1440739238bb5cbadb53d1001

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2AHIRGmm-w8
Outline

- Working with Communities: Community and Social Work
- Community Work by social workers
  - As a method
  - As a service
  - As special values
Community and Social Work

- Community as a context (工作環境)
- Community as a mutual care network (互相照顧的網絡)
- Community as an empowered community to influence social policy (影響社會政策的基地)
Community Work by social workers

One of the major intervention methods of social work

A process

Collective action

Self-help, mutual-help and self-determination

Identify and fulfill needs, solve community problems, enhance belongingness and identity to social harmony and integration and improve quality of life

Develop people’s ability and enhance their autonomy

Promote social change
Focus of Community Work

- Changing social institutions
- Changing distribution of power
- Decrease powerlessness
- Increase self-confidence and empowerment
Targets of Community Work

- HK: from general residents of geographical community to vulnerable groups in geographical community
- e.g. chronic patients, women, CSSA recipients, elderly
- Organised those people have common problems or needs,
  - Provide support, service and sharing network
  - decrease dependence on formal and professional service
  - Transform to pressure group for advocate attention from public and government
Definition of Community Work:

- An social work intervention method using community as target
- Through organizing people to participate in collective action, to identify needs of the community and to solve community problem collectively
- Improve living environment and quality of life
Definition of Community Work

- In the participation process, increase the belongingness of the people, build self-help, mutual-help, and self-determination.
- Increase people’s participation in issues of the community and their ability and consciousness in influencing social policy
- Achieve potential, promote leadership
- To bring a more equal, justice, democratic and harmonious society.
As a method

one of the three major intervention methods: case, group and community work

Relative to case and group work, intervention, community work is the latest intervention method recognized by social work profession

Extend dimension of the analysis of social work out of the micro level, fill in the gap of crisis intervention, so that clients’ problem can be solved comprehensively
As a method

Community work have the same value basis as case and group work of social work profession: believe in self-determination, dignity and worth, justice.

In different service settings, community have been adopted, e.g. youth council and social concern in youth service; self-help groups for chronic patients and their relatives; policy advocacy and right protection organizations of elderly, networking in family services.
Community work as special service

In HK, community development (社區發展) have been considered as a special service as youth, elderly and family service.

In the 50’s and 60’s, large number of refugees, established Community Centre(社區中心)，enhance belongingness and cooperation.
Community work as special service

In the late 70's, rising numbers of squatter and temporary housing with poor housing condition, government subvented social work agencies to set up Neighbourhood Level Community Development Project 「鄰舍層面社區發展計劃」 (NLCDP), the recognition of community work as a service by HK government.

In the 90’s, Government try to close down NLCDP, but facing objection from residents and social workers, the speed of closing down has been lowered.
Community work as special values

In broad sense, anyone or organisation perform activities to serve people in the community, can be treated as 'community work'.

United Nations in 1963 define Community development as ‘the process by which the efforts of the people themselves are united with those of governmental authorities to improve the economic, social, and cultural conditions of communities, to integrate those communities into life of the nation, and to enable them to contribute fully to national progress.’

In reality, political parties, counsellors, and resident groups fulfil the above broad definition.
Community work as special values

However, those ‘community work’ above does not have any ‘social work/community work’ values.

Community work, thus, not only as a method, or as a service, its essence is that it have its own values and principle (spirit).
Special Values of Community Work

- Use community as target;
- Structural orientation;
- Wider intervention dimension: social institutions and social policies
- Emphasis on people’s collective participation
- Task goal and process goal are both important
- Utilize resources in the community - strength-base/ asset-base
- Political in nature